

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: GOVERNMENT ABANDONS RESERVATIONS ON DIRECT ELECTIONS
TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

REF : 75 COPENHAGEN 3702

SUMMARY. THE DANISH GOVERNMENT HAS PUBLICLY DROPPED ITS TWO
RESERVATIONS ON DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT.

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THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, REMAINS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE "CON-
STITUENCY QUESTION" AND WITH A DEVICE TO ASSURE THAT DANISH
EC PARLIAMENTARIANS REMAIN IN TOUCH WITH DANISH POLITICAL
REALITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. REFTEL REPORTED OUR BELIEF THAT THE TWO RESERVATIONS THAT
DENMARK POSED TO DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

(THE DOUBLE MANDATE AND COINCIDENCE OF NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN ELECTIONS) WOULD BE DROPPED IN TIME FOR THIS COUNTRY TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN MID-1978 DIRECT ELECTIONS TO STRASBOURG. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED ON APRIL 26 BY AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT THAT IT WAS ABANDONING THESE TWO CONDITIONS.

2. THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW POSITION WAS ALMOST A FOREGONE CONCLUSION SINCE A SIZEABLE FOLKETING MAJORITY EXISTS IN FAVOR OF REMOVING THESE CONDITIONS. FURTHERMORE, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE BECOME CONSIDERABLE MORE "EUROPEAN" THAN THE ATTITUDES THEY PUT ON PUBLIC DISPLAY A FEW YEARS AGO.

3. OPPONENTS OF DANISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMON MARKET OR TO FURTHER POLITICAL INTEGRATION INTO THE EC WOULD LIKE TO TAP THE WIDE-SPREAD ANTI-EC SENTIMENT WHICH CONTINUES TO EXIST IN DENMARK. (THE LAST PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON THIS QUESTION WAS TAKEN IN DECEMBER 1976 AND SHOWED ONLY 31 PERCENT FAVORING DENMARK'S MEMBERSHIP IN EC WITH 50 PERCENT AGAINST AND 19 PERCENT DON'T KNOWS.) GIVEN THE STRONG PARLIAMENTARY BACKING FOR UNRESERVED DANISH PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRST ELECTIONS TO A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE ONLY PRACTICAL WAY THAT EC OPPONENTS CAN GET TO THE PEOPLE IS FOR 60 OF THE 179 FOLKETING MEMBERS TO REQUEST A REFERENDUM. AT THE MOST - AND THIS PRESUMES A SPLIT IN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY ITSELF - NO MORE THAN 50 COULD BE LINED UP ON THIS ISSUE.

4. LIKE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EC, DENMARK IS STRUGGLING OVER THE QUESTION OF HOW TO DESCRIBE THE CONSTITUENCY FOR THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRASBOURG ELECTIONS. THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO DEEPLY INTERESTED IN FINDING A DEVICE THAT WOULD ASSURE THAT DENMARK'S EC PARLIAMENTARIANS REMAIN RESPONSIVE TO DANISH POLITICAL REALITIES. ONE DEVICE UNDER DISCUSSION IS THAT THE COUNTRY'S 16 EC PARLIAMENTARIANS WOULD BE MADE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE FOLKETING'S MARKETS COMMITTEE.

5. PARLIAMENTARY MEASURES TO ADJUST THE DANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM TO MAKE IT READY FOR THE STRASBOURG ELECTIONS IN 1978 ARE NOW IN A FOLKETING COMMITTEE. WE ARE TOLD THAT THERE IS A CHANCE THAT THEY COULD BE SORTED OUT AND PASSED BEFORE THE PRESENT SESSION ADJOURNS IN JUNE. BUT MOST PARLIAMENTARY OBSERVERS BELIEVE IT MORE LIKELY THAT THE REQUIRED DECISIONS AND ACTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE ONLY WHEN PARLIAMENT RECONVENES IN OCTOBER.

6. IF, IN FACT, NO FOLKETING ACTION ON DANISH ELECTORAL CHANGES CAN BE OBTAINED IN THIS SESSION'S ALREADY CROWDED AGENDA, THE DANES BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO MOVE FAST IN THE FALL FOR, OUR SOURCES ESTIMATE, ABOUT SIX MONTHS WILL

BE NEEDED TO PUT THROUGH THE NECESSARY REGULATORY PROCEDURES
BEFORE EC PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD HERE.
DEAN

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